

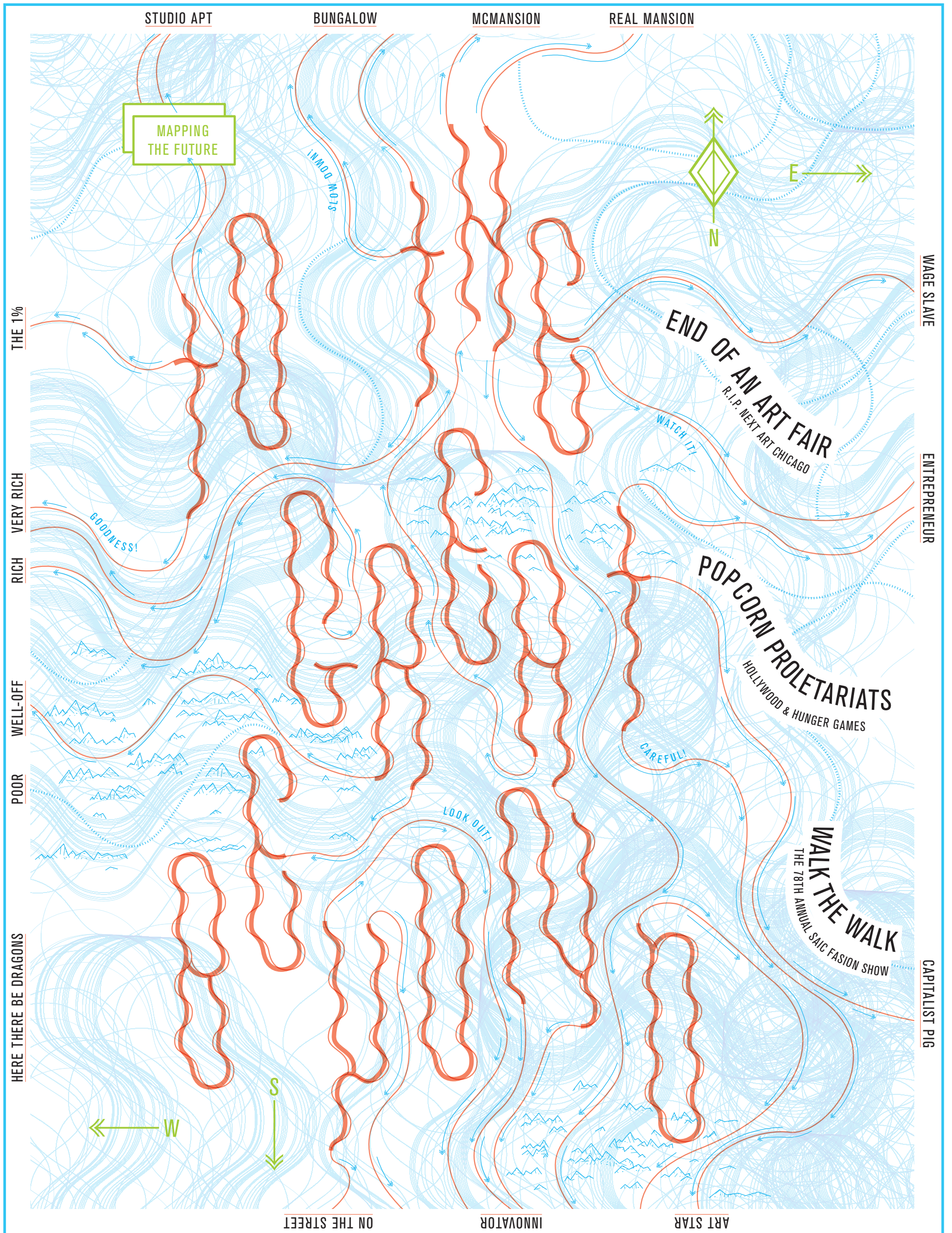
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A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ARTS, CULTURE AND POLITICS

MAY 2012

NEWSMAGAZINE

The School of the Art Institute
of Chicago



Rashid Johnson



Message to Our Folks

**Apr 14–
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The Shuttle, 2011. Rabell Family Collection, Miami. Courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA



NEWSMAGAZINE



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“12th Annual Spring Art Sale”

An exclusive video with highlights from the recent student art sale by Multimedia Editor Dijana Kadic.

“F Profile – Angel Otero”

Staff writer Kris Lenz took a tour through the Art Institute of Chicago with SAIC Alum and acclaimed painter Angel Otero to discuss his past and current work.

“BFA Show Spring 2012 – Opening Night”

F Newsmagazine's exclusive video of this year's BFA exhibition.

“Towards a Better World”

Deepak Unnikrishnan

If you have a story, article or note that you want published on Fnewsmagazine.com, send submissions to: webeditor@fnewsmagazine.com.

F Newsmagazine is proud to announce its recent awards for college journalism, design and publishing.

F Newsmagazine won 16 awards from the **Student Society for News Design** this year, including the prestigious First Place for Best Overall Design. Alli Berry, Art Director for F Newsmagazine won 2nd place for Designer of the Year. Alli Berry (Art Director), Annette Elliot (Managing Editor), and Alejandra González Romo (News Editor) received SAIC's student leadership awards for service, advocacy, and innovation.

F Newsmagazine also received an ACP Newspaper Pacemaker Award from the Associated College Press. Writers, editors and designers of F Newsmagazine also received 11 Illinois College Press Association awards.



“Mapping the Future”

Cover Design by Alli Berry



THE NEXT FUCKING STEP

To the masses, May is a time when summer is only a few shades of green away and the promise of warmth – however bearable or unbearable – looms large on every sunbeam. For some scholars it also marks the end of the school year, and for the graduating classes of the world it marks the end of an era. Whatever the latter may mean to you, there are plenty of tracks to hum while taking that long walk through the crowd and into the real world.



“Stain of Mind”
by **Slayer**
from *Diabolus in Musica* (1998)

No one ever crushes their opposition to Huey Lewis & the News — except for Patrick Bateman from “American Psycho,” and he’s so far off the deep end it almost seems justified. When striking out against the enemy, and when the enemy is the whole of humankind, why not choose Slayer and their brand of anti-everything sermons?



“Don’t Look Back In Anger”
by **Oasis**
from *(What’s the Story) Morning Glory* (1995)

The only things that might outweigh the brilliance of Oasis’ first few albums are the egos of the Gallagher brothers, whose quibbling is now the stuff of rock legend. You wouldn’t be able to tell that from the music though, which sounds like a seamless blend of every hook in the “British Invasion Hall of Fame.” Incidentally, that also makes for a great boozy shout-along at the after-party.

« SAD SACK



“The Boxer”
by **Simon & Garfunkel**
from *Bridge Over Troubled Water* (1970)

For those leaving school with a bitter taste in their mouth, this track is an indispensable part of the score for any and all “swan songs.” The final orchestral crescendo instills a kind of bravado only possible through strife, and the tasteful, rolling, finger-picked outro is perfect for walking off into sunsets.



“Here I Go Again”
by **Whitesnake**
from *Saints & Sinners* (1982)

You’re at a turning point; you’re not sure where you’re going; your teased-out bleached-blond hairdo is held down by a purple bandana: what do you listen to? Whitesnake, of course. It’s a scary world out there, and sometimes the only comfort is a gravelly-voiced power ballad and leopard-print spandex.



“Graduation (Friends Forever)”
by **Vitamin C**
from *Vitamin C* (1999)

This song, with its unabashed nostalgia, melancholic strings and garish dance beat, signaled the graduation of humankind from the 1990s. In spite of that refined sadness, Vitamin C, a.k.a. Colleen Fitzpatrick, would go on to star in “Dracula 2000,” which featured Leonidas as Dracula, Captain Von Trapp as Van Helsing and Fitzpatrick herself as a topless vampire. I’m sure that last role had more depth to it, but in 1999, I was too busy with puberty to care.



“Montana”
by **Youth Lagoon**
from *The Year of Hibernation* (2011)

Youth Lagoon makes good use of reverb in this track, though the output isn’t surf-y or girl group-y as is usually the case with fellow lovers of deep space echo. “Montana” seems to be Grade A output from the Arcade Fire School of Anthems — featuring lyrics about breaking free from bedrooms, a floor-stomping kick drum heartbeat and maxims like, “A plant is said to be dead if it doesn’t grow,” which is rather sage advice for a graduate.



“Leaving, On A Jet Plane”
by **John Denver**
from *Rhymes & Reasons* (1969)

John Denver was one of the most honest singer/songwriters to come out of the post-Dylan folk boom, largely because he could communicate the most banal of joys and sorrows without hyperbolizing. Instead, as in this early career folk lullaby, Denver relies on a simple sing-song melody that’s instantly memorable and makes it that much harder to leave whoever you’re leaving.

listen on Spotify!



AUDIOPHILES



“Young Turks”
by Rod Stewart
from Tonight I'm Yours (1981)

The pulse of a good synth beat, polished to a high-gloss new wave sheen — the guilty pleasure epitomized. Some people would break free and hit the ground running to “Young Turks” while trying to forget it’s Rod Stewart doing the crooning. Me, I like to picture him bouncing around like a blonde palm tree in the background of a scene from “Flashdance.”



“Tarzan Boy”
by Baltimora
from Tarzan Boy (1985)

If we all had theme songs with tacky synth hooks like “Tarzan Boy,” none of us would mind being let loose into the jungle of the real world. You might bask in the warm ‘90s nostalgia of recalling “Beverly Hills Ninja” and “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3,” which both featured this earworm. You could also crank the monosyllabic chorus and enter every room like you own the place.



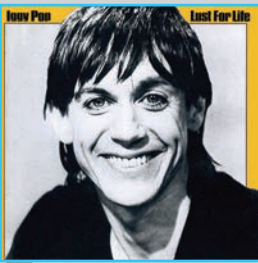
“Movin’ On Up”
by Primal Scream
from Screamadelica (1991)

Hopefully those of us who are graduating this spring can afford to say things like, “I’m movin’ on up now / Gettin’ out of the darkness.” Those who can’t can always feel a little better by clapping along with Primal Scream’s gospel choir/classic rock/acid house concoction. As Arts Editor Sarah Hamilton might add, they’re always hiring in the more wilderness-y regions of Canada, which gives you the option of literally movin’ on up.



“Believer”
by John Maus
from We Must Become the Pitiless Censors of Ourselves (2011)

As if taking a cue from “Young Turks,” John Maus delivers a throbbing bassline complete with a choir of sparkling keyboards. This one is all about unity, greatness and twinkling lights. “Jackie Chan flashing all across the world / Hulk Hogan flashing all across the world” — words to live by.



“Success”
by Iggy Pop
from Lust for Life (1977)

Heralding victory with reckless abandon, you can practically hear the smile spreading across Iggy’s face while he sings. If such a compilation existed, “Songs for Strutting, Volume 1” would blast off with this monster track’s beautifully glammy guitar solo and ecstatic call-and-response section.

JUMP FOR JOY >>



“Everybody’s Free (To Wear Sunscreen)”
by Baz Luhrmann
from Everybody’s Free (To Wear Sunscreen) (1999)

Baz Luhrmann is better known for his work as the director of 1996’s “Romeo + Juliet” and 2001’s “Moulin Rouge,” which both have the same sort of perfectly gaudy sentimentality that made “Sunscreen” into an international smash hit. In the track, Luhrmann plays less like a producer and more like a conductor, pulling elements from a multitude of sources (a beat from a 1991 song by Rozalla, a narrator from his native Australia, an essay from the Chicago Tribune, a chorus from the “Romeo + Juliet” soundtrack) and compiling them into a strangely uplifting cross between MTV and Max Ehrmann’s “Desiderata.”



“Mary France”
by Jean Jacques Perrey
from The Amazing New Electronic Pop Sound of Jean Jacques Perrey (1968)

“Pomp and Circumstance” is great, but how can anyone resist the fat, bubbly charm of Perrey’s Moog synth? He manages to take the triumphant blare of Elgar’s masterpiece and feeds it through an adding machine, coming out with something that might score Disney’s Electrical Light Parade at the end of Star Wars: Episode IV.



“Damn It Feels Good to be a Gangsta”
by Geto Boys
from Uncut Dope (1992)

No school experience is complete without more than a little conflict — often, it’s more about dealing with the complications and less about the content that leaves you wiser. Making it to graduation gives you all the right to gloat about overcoming the obstacles, which is basically what the Geto Boys are doing here, albeit while slinging filthy epithets in the process. As a bonus, with this laid back gangsta rap classic in the background, everything you do happens in extra-dramatic slow motion.

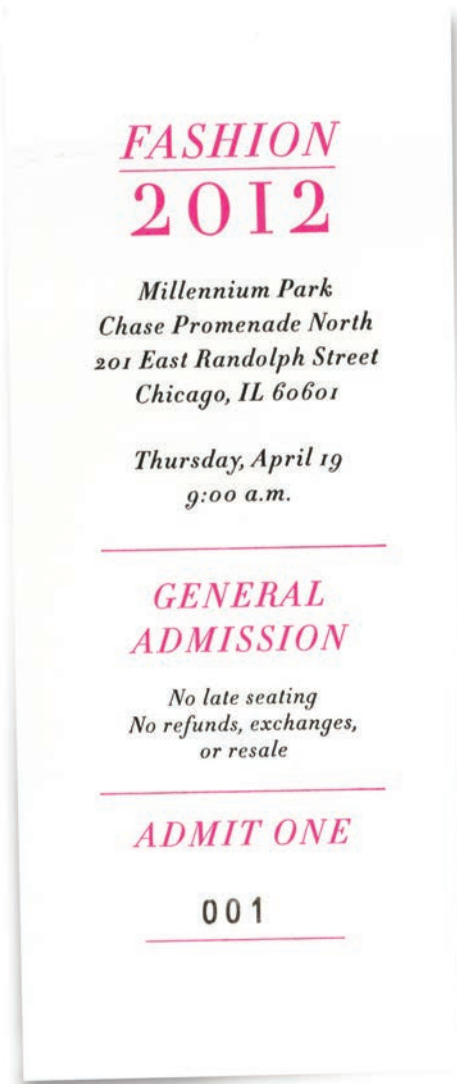
STROLL
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SCHOOL NEWS



Runway's Edge

SAIC's 78th Annual Fashion Show offers a lush visual experience



TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ALEJANDRA GONZÁLEZ ROMO

There was orderly chaos inside the maze of loaded clothing racks and lines of intricate garments ready to make their debut under the spotlights. Slender men and women waited in their underwear to be dressed, names boomed across the speakers, clothes were fitted, more models waited. Nerves, hairspray and excitement hung in the air.

It's Bridget Crow's third year participating in the fashion show, but her first as a designer. "This is really exciting. I've seen these garments evolve since the beginning of the year, and it's great to see them on the runway finished and polished," she says. "We worked all year towards something and here it is." Her sophomore design is inspired by Edwardian era lingerie worn by young women during teatime gatherings. "An occasion for them to meet with their secret lovers," she explains.

"I was inspired by the hunting of albinos in Africa," says senior Leah Babbette as she waits for the show to begin. "They are hunted because they are believed to be magical. ... Their body parts are used in potions and different rituals." Her metallic menswear collection "is a response to that feeling of physical entrapment by your skin."

Kauri Voss has been a model at the SAIC's show four years in a row. "When I started I worked with freshmen that are now seniors getting to display all their freaking talent." When asked what's different about SAIC student runways compared to others in the industry, model Colleen Kloster responds, "Freedom. They don't have to sell (their designs) right away. So they get to be as creative as they can, because they can."

"It's really exciting to be wearing the future of fashion. All of the people in this room are going to be powerful voices in the fashion world; if not already, someday soon," concludes model Jessica Ridemor.

Dan Wittenberg is ready for his last show at SAIC. His collection, inspired by the anthropological and historical context of hermaphroditism will mark, as he describes it, "a long planned finale."

SCHOOL NEWS



Closing the white backstage curtain and leaving its rush behind, a whole different atmosphere is unveiled. Expectancy. A few privileged attendees have already taken some of the best seats close to the runway. Whispers, chatter, rows of perfectly lined black chairs adorned with bright green programs waiting on their seats. Nick Cave walks around in his black shiny boots, then suddenly disappears.

Outside the tent, a long line of people keeps growing along the south side of Millennium Park.

At three o'clock sharp the doors open and guests flow in — taking a second to look around the space before speeding up towards the available seats that disappear within a few minutes.

Not long after, the hallways go dark and lights brighten over the spotless white runway. Cave reappears becoming the first to mark the stage. “I’ve seen the show three times already and it’s great,” he says. He expresses the Fashion Department’s pride in presenting the results of their students’ hard work and welcomes everyone to SAIC’s 78th Fashion Show. He walks back towards the curtains.

Loud, upbeat electronic music hightens the anticipation of the long-awaited first collection. Tosha Sherman’s design inaugurates the show. Music shifts rapidly back and forth in time, into sounds from the 1960s and ’70s and then far ahead into Depeche Mode, Björk and Lana del Rey.

“A lot of post apocalyptic imagery ... [and] denial or erosion of the self, which I’ve seen professionally with Alexander McQueen,” says Shahaia Yah, an enthusiastic attendee wearing a fur coat and bright red lipstick, about the themes she identifies in the runway. “Despite being so young, these students have their fingers on the pulse of what is happening in our society. It’s not only clothing, it’s a narrative,” she observes excitedly.

A red toy decorates a model’s hair. Masks, braids, sheer glamour and professionalism, faces in awe — there is much to see. A couple of flimsy ankles struggle with really high wedges, but finally there is applause — fulfillment of a job well done.



MFA SHOW HIGHLIGHTS



1) **My Mother and Donna** by Kelly K. Jones



2) **Buttersworth Ostoff** by Sophia Rauch



3) **Ex nihilo** by Michael Webster



4) **Elephant In The Room** by Gillian Riley



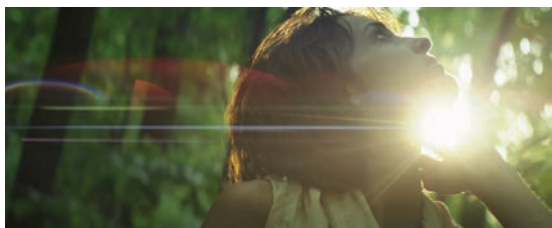
5) **Chicago Monument Installation: The Divided Line in the Form of a Square (The Practice of Memory)** by Charles Schneider



6) **Everything We Knew Is Wrong** by Katie Short



7) **The Air-Loom** by Andrew Barco



8) **Always Always, Anne Marie** by Zia Anger

1) **Kelly K. Jones, Photography**

"I am one of the few white people in my neighborhood. As a white woman born, raised and continuing to live in a predominately African-American community, I explore my transient cultural identity through photography. I spent much of the last year-and-a-half making photographs of my friends and family members in abandoned city lots in North Lawndale, our neighborhood. Navigating between record and metaphor, images of my community and personal landscape allow for an investigation of my surroundings, my relationships and my identity."

2) **Sophia Rauch, Painting**

"My paintings are executed directly on the wall with rollers or squeegees. ...The work I am presenting at the MFA exhibition is in response to the work of the artists in my curatorial group, Craig Buttersworth, Nick Ostoff and William Sieruta, and our space in the Sullivan Galleries. I began my project by painting placeholders for their works directly on the wall, photographed the installation, duplicated my paintings on an external wall of the gallery and then painted out the originals. My installation will include a large wall painting, a photograph, and a placeholder painting."

3) **Michael Webster, Sculpture**

"An often told Chicago narrative is one of singular architects creating visionary plans for the city. In Ex nihilo, I wanted to engage this idea of architect as visionary, but to reverse its course, and take the past as our subject. After finding unusual ruins buried within a forest preserve in the south suburbs, I asked 6 Chicago architects to draw their interpretations of the site's past. These drawings envision the site in a variety of ways, raising questions of how form and function are entwined and histories are constructed."

4) **Gillian Riley, Painting**

"I come from a place that believes art is a spiritual and psychological quest to welcome the unborn into the world. Nothing is too precious it cannot be changed. I had thought we could define relationships by acknowledging the spaces between things. But I have come to realize the space between is defined by points of connection. We can create a delicate web of understanding by taking a whole, separating out components, and rearranging them into an entirely new but related thing."

5) **Charles Schneider, Ceramics**

"My sailing project, The Divided Line in the Form of a Square (the practice of memory), was conceived as a site-specific performative installation for the outdoor public sculpture exhibition, Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi in Sydney, Australia. My aim for the MFA Exhibition at Sullivan Galleries is to create an experience that is the functional equivalent for Chicago viewers."

6) **Katie Short, Ceramics**

"'Everything We Knew Is Wrong' is a study of objects as alchemical materials, destruction as a means to creation and visualization of a shifting vision of reality. Melting glass around other found objects is a way of incinerating material while simultaneously preserving the remnants within, both cathartic and sentimental."

7) **Andrew Barco, Sculpture**

"This project is a response to my research on an 18th century psychotic, James Tilly Matthews, who believed he was persecuted by what he called an "Air-Loom," a pneumatic device that could influence his thoughts and world history. I'm particularly interested in this machine, which marked the moment, at the turn of the industrial revolution, when people stopped being possessed by demons and started to be possessed by technology. This object is a piece of a larger project, which might be called a pneumatic history of culture — moments in politics, philosophy, or science when air was either remembered or repressed as a material participant in the unfolding human drama of our shared life on this air-enclosed planet."

8) **Zia Anger, FVNM**

Take your friends and family. Make something: As Anne Marie cares for her ailing father she becomes pregnant. She embarks on a talismanic journey in search of her mother, who vanished after her birth. This is the beginning. (21 minute excerpt. RED, Hi8, 16mm and Super 8mm film, transferred to Blu-ray.)

ANALYSIS

Art & Occupy

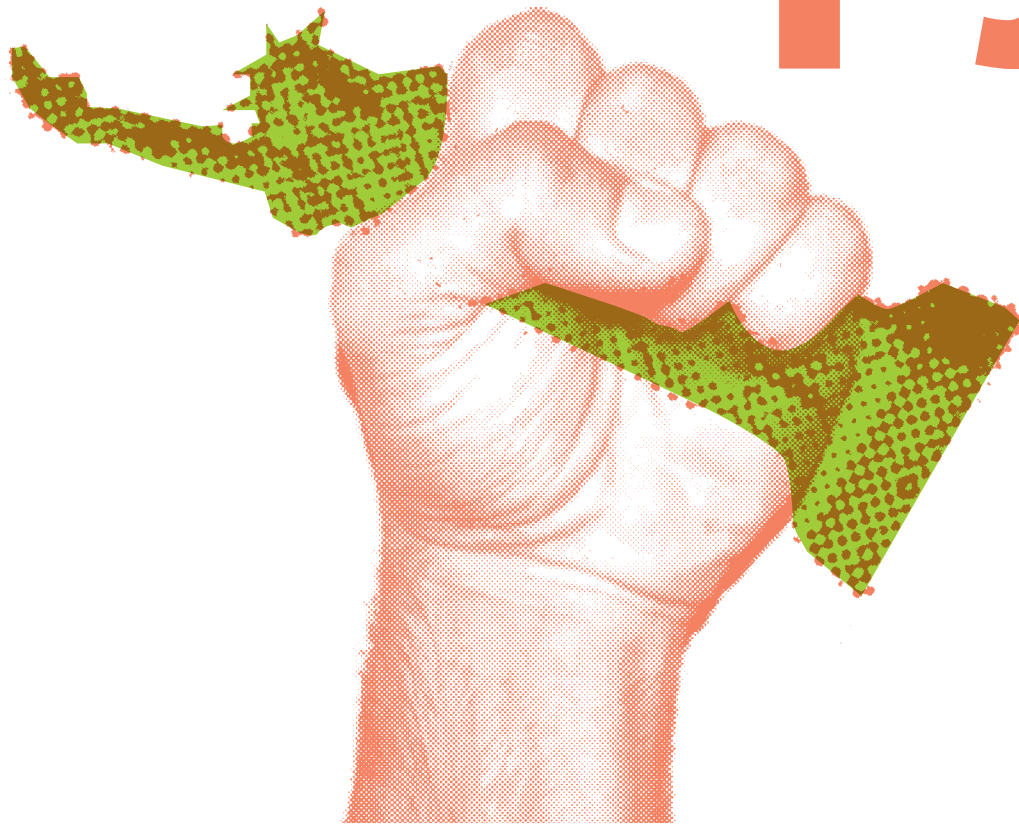


Illustration by Patrick Jenkins

BY MICHELLE WEIDMAN

“Our basic message is: the taboo is broken, we do not live in the best possible world, we are allowed and obliged even to think about alternatives,” philosopher Slavoj Žižek addressed Occupy Wall Street at Zuccotti Park on October 9, 2011. He located the occupation as the beginning of a movement, not the end, and urged his audience to expand political narratives, allowing for even a brief glimpse, some may say nothing more than a shadow, of a world beyond Capitalism.

The Occupy movement developed in the aesthetic realm, making it an important aesthetic contribution, even before considering its occupation of the arts and art-related activities. The notable conceptual and visual beginnings — with the Adbusters, call and the image of a ballerina perched on top of the bull near Wall Street — preceded and were somewhat independent from the physical occupations that later developed globally.

Beyond these fledgling moments there have developed various groups focused on artistic production for the movement as well as direct action against what are perceived to be the ills of the art world. These groups include the Arts and Culture Committee of Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Museums and Occuprint, to name a few. While the Occupy movement may have aesthetic

beginnings, the question remains, how can art help further develop the aims of the movement as a whole? How are these groups, and others, using art for social change?

The Beginning

The conceptual initiators of the movement — Adbusters editor Lasn Kalle and his colleagues — were not responsible for its materialization and had no way of anticipating how it would unfold. However, as William Yardley points out in his NY Times article “The Branding of the Occupy Movement,” they were responsible for developing Occupy as a meme.

“If you’re able to come up with a very sexy sounding hashtag like we did for Occupy Wall Street, and you come up with a very magical looking poster that seems to have something very profound about it, these devices push these memes, these meta memes, into the public imagination in a very powerful way,” the article quotes Kalle, explaining how he believes Adbusters contributes to the movement.

In the same New York Times article, Yardley notes that some people had been skeptical of Adbusters’ use of glossy visual

Continued on next page

ANALYSIS

ART & OCCUPY



Occuprint publication



Occupy Blue X by Manya Kuzemchenko

Continued from previous page

media as an effective political tool. They questioned the ability of the advertising vocabulary to serve as legitimate cultural critique. This skepticism echoes a general distrust of art as a revolutionary tool.

The question of the political effectiveness of certain forms of representation is a crucial issue when concrete social and political change is the goal. To be sure, the movement didn't actually begin until individuals congregated in specific geographical locations. Now, however, after the physical spaces that were occupied — Zuccotti Park, most memorably — have been cleared, the presence of the movement has shifted. While direct action and outreach are essential for political organization, could art fulfill an imperative for imagining an alternate world?

The Artist/Activist

"The idea was that we could open up a space for creativity or for free exchange of ideas," explained documentary filmmaker and SAIC alumna Marisa Holmes, a member and organizer of Occupy Wall Street. *F News* magazine spoke with Holmes about the role of art within the movement a few months ago. She continued, "From the beginning, visuals and ideas were catalysts and they have continued to be in certain respects."

However, Holmes makes certain to note the importance of direct action beyond aesthetics and image-making: "The question is how does art function in society and how can art be a way of life? In order for that to happen you have to confront the way that art is commodified and used as a tool of cultural status. ... It is really about fundamental change; it is not about an aesthetic."

Art and politics have had a prolific, if somewhat unsettled relationship in the United States. With the rise of the New Left in the 1960s, the nature of explicitly political art production moved to the foreground of debates surrounding the function of art in society. As Julia Bryan-Wilson outlines in "Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era," artists began thinking of their labor in overtly political ways, turning their attention beyond the value of a specific artwork to the process of artistic production.

Art Workers Coalition and Art Strike in New York City were at the front lines of thinking about how art and artists could and should fit into society. However, the professional art world continued to function separately, and some would say at the expense of, the majority of working- and middle-class Americans. These divisions are what Holmes and other members of the Occupy movement hope to demolish along with the brutal inequities of the capitalist system. "The idea is that everyone is an artist. That creativity is a way of life not separate from society," Holmes insists.

While artists have typically been at the forefront of popular uprisings such as the Vietnam War protests in the '60s and '70s and AIDS activism in the '80s, some of the art coming out of the current movement is indicative of a growing professionalization of art-making. There are many art projects developing out of Occupy Wall Street created by professional artists and designers. Alternately, there are many representations including innumerable protest ephemera and Internet memes — such as "the pepper spraying cop" — that have contributed, supported and furthered the Occupy cause.

From Cardboard and Sharpie to Photoshop**and Beyond**

In January 2012, Vanity Fair published a slideshow of visual and written propaganda made by and for the movement collected by the New York Historical Society titled, "The Revolution will be Graphic-Designed." The slideshow includes leaflets, posters and manifestos. The Occupied Wall Street Journal mimics the design of the conventional Wall Street Journal's layout.

The November 2011 issue of The Occupied Wall Street Journal was dedicated to protest posters, designed by artists such as filmmaker Chris Marker or the Internet group Anonymous. The edition of The Journal was a collaboration curated by members of Occuprint, a printmaking collective that posts original Occupy-inspired images from around the world on its website where their further use is encouraged.

"Our aim is not to produce a unified aesthetic, but to magnify the diversity within this movement," states the Occuprint website. "We are not trying to create a new brand, we are trying to build a new life." They have been successful in creating an archive of diverse images from around the world.

The posters in The Occupied Wall Street Journal range from a simple graphic of a raised fist marked by the "99%" logo in red, white and blue, to a detailed illustration of Mexican worker standing in front of a crowd of protestors. At the head of the poster it states, "Somos el 99%" and at the bottom it speaks for the worker, "I'm blamed for the economic Crisis...But what about the Wall Street banks?" The posters are diverse in image use and in message.

Despite its belief in diverse participation, Occuprint does not function as an organiz-

ANALYSIS

ART & OCCUPY



A collection of Occupyprint publications

ing committee of Occupy Wall Street. It maintains a transparent but not quite democratic curatorial process. They do not hold open meetings and recognize that this runs counter to the horizontal structure of the movement. While they encourage submissions from anyone regardless of artistic training, they do have certain guidelines, like avoiding the use of imagery already associated with electoral politics or corporate branding as well as posters that don't have a clear political message.

The use of posters in political movements is obviously not new. What is somewhat novel about this particular project is the ability to collect and distribute them easily and cheaply via the website, which is quickly becoming a vast international collection of Occupy-inspired graphics.

While Occupyprint is an example of visual representation for the movement, other groups are focusing on economic and cultural elements of art circulation. Occupy Museums has garnered attention through its attempts to highlight economic inequalities in the art world by protesting outside of MoMA and setting up an alternative to the Armory Show in New York.

Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

On March 28, SAIC undergraduate Emily Day pitched a tent and briefly occupied the 13th floor of the McLean Center. No one joined her. In fact, the only attention she garnered was from two school officials who told her to remove the tent or face disciplinary action in the form of a meeting with Student Life. Feeling defeated by a seeming lack of interest from her peers, Day packed up and moved on. To be fair, the performance was

planned last minute and involved little to no publicity, but it was successful in pointing out a certain lack of enthusiasm within the school body.

Day was a member of the briefly formed Occupy SAIC group, which, at its height had about 20 to 30 active members and organized one tabling event, according to Day. When *F* Newsmagazine asked why she thought the SAIC student body was disinterested about forming an SAIC-specific group, she couldn't give a definitive answer. She did express hope for a resurgence of general interest now that Occupy Chicago meetings are moving back outdoors from the relatively uninviting building at 500 W. Cermak, where meetings were held through the winter.

Much of the Occupy Wall Street sophistication both in organizing and in visual production is still yet to be realized in Chicago, where the movement has been smaller. The Arts and Recreation Committee of Occupy Chicago has focused on organizing outreach events and networking artists from around the city. Their most recent projects have included the formation of the Rebel Arts Collective and the event "Better Days Ahead: a cultural tribute to the memory of Troy Davis and Martina Correia."

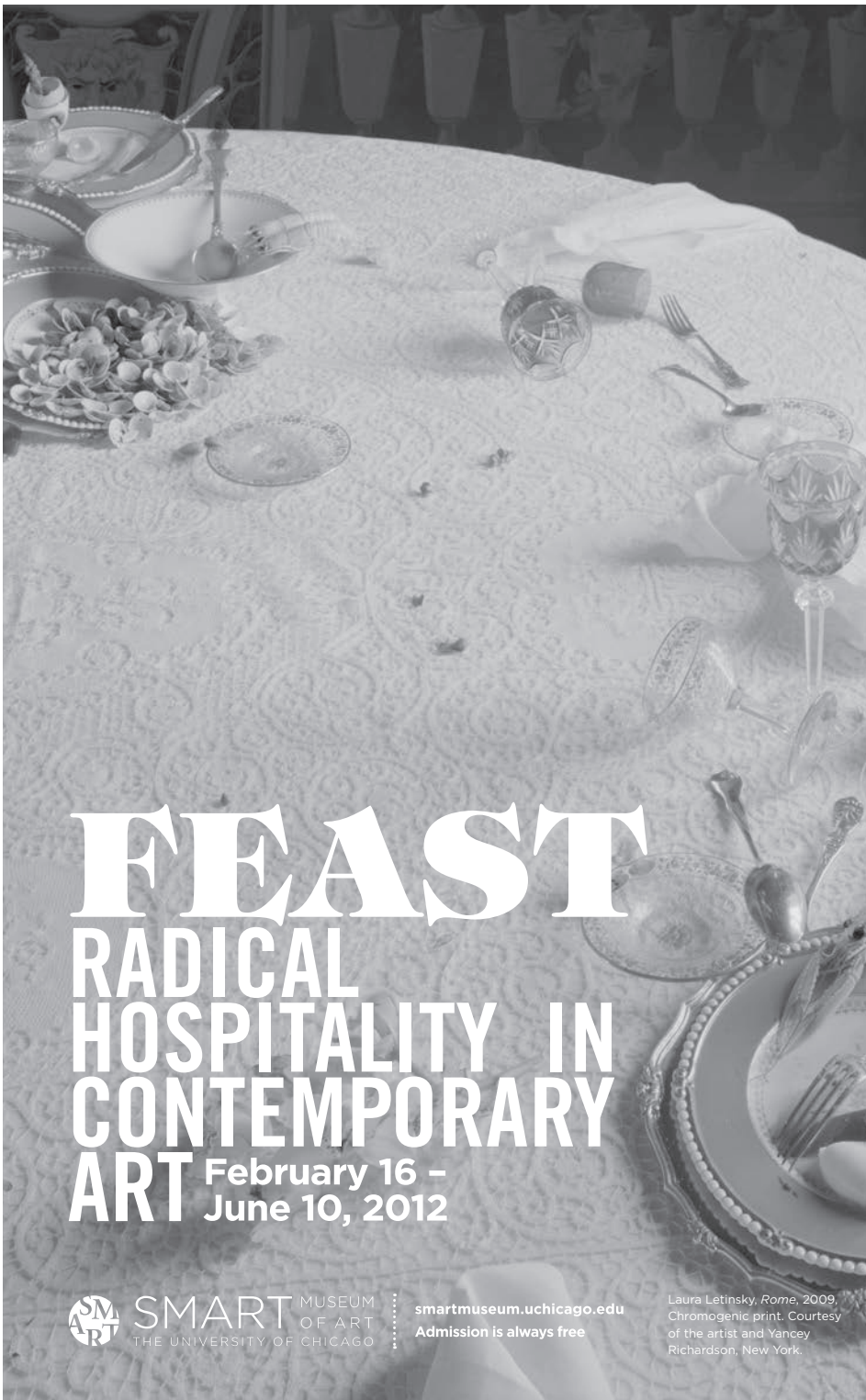
"What we started trying to do was to connect artists together to create a collective and work on projects that were based in Social and Economic Justice themes, but not necessarily have to interface with Occupy — not have to go to General Assembly or stand on street corners," explained artist Trina McGee. *F* Newsmagazine spoke with McGee and Amy Buckler, both organizers within the Arts and Recreation Committee and its offshoot the Rebel Arts Collective.

When asked about the role of art within Occupy Chicago, McGee said, "Some days,

we are the heartbeat and some days we are the left toenail of the movement. There is definitely a give and take. ... Making art is a task and a commitment in itself. Within Occupy, people who are not artists forget that it doesn't make itself. There is such a craving for it at times, and other times they wonder why we are spending our time doing this when we could be doing something else."

Most recently the group focused on building a giant "wishing tree" that was erected for the Chicago Spring Festival on April 7. Public participation was central for the completion of the tree, which featured the hopes and dreams for a better world written on its leaves. Buckler explained the construction of the tree: "You can't just say, let's make a 15-foot tree out of paper-mache. We have to make sure it is safe and no one dies. If we can get it on rollers and find a very large person to push it, it will be legal. But, if we can't make that happen it will be immobile and the cops will tear it down and take it away." The ultimate purpose of the tree was to spotlight hope for a better world echoing Slavoj Žižek's speech. According to McGee, "So many people haven't even considered how they would want the world to change. When someone finally asks them, they either don't talk, or they don't stop talking."

Ultimately, McGee and Buckler would also agree with Kalle's sentiments about the power of visual arts: "One thing I hear frequently about Occupy is that it captured people's imaginations, and that is one of the things that made it successful compared to a lot of other, smaller movements. It lit a spark, and that is something that art has the potential and the ability to do as well. It is a matter of, in a world where things are changing so fast, keeping on top of that spark."



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Laura Letinsky, *Rome*, 2009. Chromogenic print. Courtesy of the artist and Yancey Richardson, New York.



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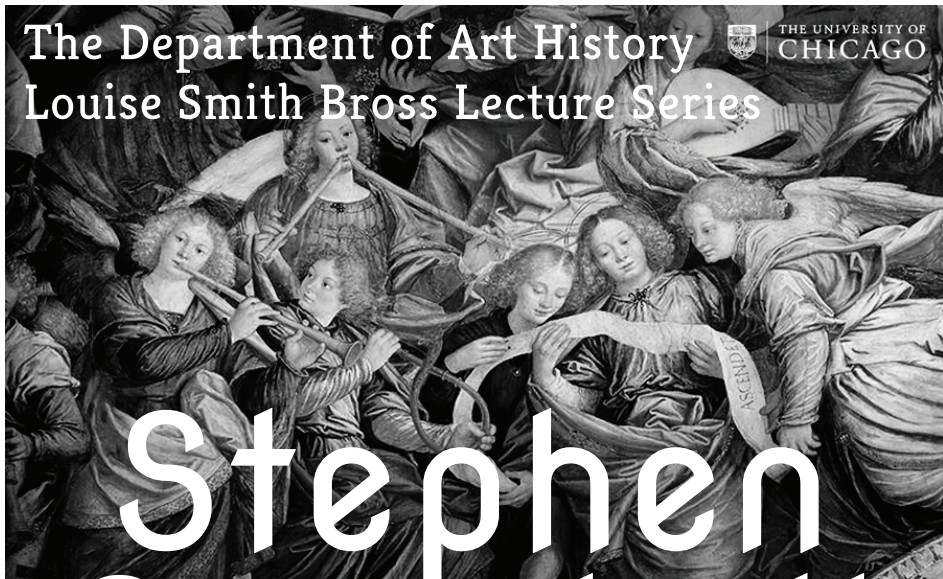
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TIP SHEET

Societal discontent: the new black

What to Wear, What to Wear?

BY BRANDON GOEI

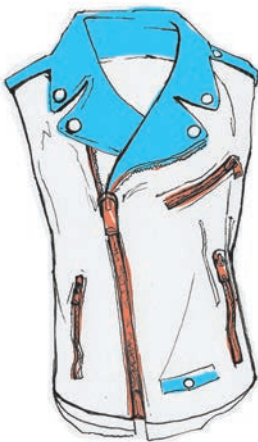
So you’ve decided to revolt. Some protesters use the tried and true tools of civil disobedience like sit-ins, picket lines and incendiary slogans, but there’s nothing stopping them (and you) from adding “staggering fashion sense” to the list of tactics. Here are a few ways to stopping the inhumanity by dazzling the opposition.



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Leather Trimmed Canvas Backpack

by Belstaff

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There are plenty of cheaper canvas rucksacks out there, but why bother? You’re going to be out on the streets for hours, so why not carry your items in the best style that money can buy? Note: diamond-studded gas mask and caviar/toast square snack packs not included.

Biker Leather Gilet

by Alexander McQueen

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You might balk at the price of this vest (three grand and you don’t even get sleeves?) but you’ve got to remember you’re investing in the kind of (social) mobility than any amount of talcum powder could ever lend to leather sleeves.

Six O’ Six Boot

by John Varvatos

\$598

Combat boots that are actually made for combat are clunky and boring. This model by John Varvatos is severely upgraded, and features an Italian calf suede upper and tonal stitching, so you can stomp the law out with sartorial subtlety.

Revolution T-Shirt

\$20

Who is this guy anyway? Whoever he is, does he know his picture totally rips off Shepard Fairey? How unoriginal. Put me down for four.

Artists seek justice for victims of police torture

BY ANNETTE ELLIOT

"I only had a couple bruises on my arm and a busted lip. But the rest of the injuries were internal from the electricity shot through me with the black box," Anthony Holmes testified during the two-day sentencing of Jon Burge. "I still have nightmares, not as bad as they were, but I still have them. I wake up in a cold sweat. I still fear that I am going back to jail for this again. I see myself falling in a deep hole and no one helping me to get out."

Forty years after the first allegations of police torture, the specter of Burge continues to loom over the city of Chicago. On January 21, 2011, the disgraced former Chicago Police Commander was sentenced to four and a half years in federal prison for obstruction of justice and perjury. This small measure of justice pales in light of the testimonies of decade-long police torture.

From 1972 to 1991, Burge and detectives of Area 2 tortured over 195 black men from the South Side of Chicago until they confessed. In a brick building on the corner of 91st and Cottage

"Never let the memorial be the end, because the struggle is not over with. Until we bring to justice those who prosecuted, those they had question marks about whether or not they were guilty, whether or not they had been tortured — until we do that, I wouldn't give a flying dove if you put a memorial on every corner."

— Darrell Cannon, torture survivor

Public
Reckoning

Grove, the alleged criminals were interrogated, beaten, burned, suffocated and electroshocked.

Chicago's dark history of police brutality and corruption has long been shrouded in silence. A determined group of activists, journalists and lawyers has condemned the willful blindness of the city and the state of Illinois. Former Cook County state's attorney and later mayor Richard M. Daley currently faces conspiracy allegations in a lawsuit filed by Michael Tillman for ignoring abuse complaints filed against the police and aiding in the cover-up.

Holmes, a former leader of the Black Gangster Disciples, remembers the police torture of May 30, 1973: "I remember looking around the room at the other officers. I thought one of them would say that enough was enough. They never did."

The police force and the city refuse to admit responsibility or apologize for the torture.

"What you see before you today is a very bitter man," confessed Darrell Cannon at a roundtable discussion of torture survivors. In 1983, after a forced confession, Cannon was convicted of murder and incarcerated for 24 years before he was exonerated and released. "I keep hatred within me. I would never in life tell you that I could forgive. As long as I've got breath in my body, I will never forgive."

In the mahogany dining room of the Jane Addams Hull House, a group of artists, activists and educators gathered. The March 17 Open House was the continuation of a series of grassroots charrettes and roundtable

discussions to generate ideas for memorials of the Chicago torture cases.

"We don't have any illusions that a torture memorial can heal these wounds," explains SAIC professor in the Film, Video and New Media Department Mary Patten. "The struggle is how do you incorporate this traumatic event that happened to you, make meaning of it and go on."

Chicago Torture Justice Memorial (CTJM) is calling for proposals from artists and justice seekers for a yearlong series of exhibitions beginning in late June. The project is to extend throughout the city of Chicago from the Southside Community Art Center, to Westside Chicago Public libraries, the downtown Sullivan Center, and Mess Hall in Rogers Park. Conceived of as an educational grassroots project, the goal of CTJM is not the erection of a monument, but through performances, roundtable discussions, lectures and exhibitions, to stimulate dialogue in the public sphere concerning the Chicago torture cases.

"The proposals will allow individuals to take the events into their own consciousness and create their own relationship to them," says SAIC sculpture professor A. Laurie Palmer. "The open call will allow a critical mass of people to engage with the issues in ways they might not otherwise engage by simply hearing news broadcasts."

Conflict over official and unofficial histories — whose voice should be heard and whose suppressed — complicates the tradition of the monument. For decades, testimonies of the

torture victims were ignored; it was a black man's word against a white man's, a convicted criminal's against a cop's. "It often seemed there were two cultures in conflict in the courtroom," reports journalist John Conroy in a 1990 Chicago Reader article "House of Screams." "One was black, poor, given to violence, and often in trouble with the law. The other was white, respectable, given to violence, and in charge of enforcing the law."

"The memorial form is problematic," argues Patten, "especially if it is attempting to speak for a unified voice, arrive at a consensus and close the chapter on these awful events."

"Never let the memorial be the end, because the struggle is not over with." Cannon's voice intensified with each statement as he addressed the audience gathered at the torture survivor's roundtable. "Until we can bring to justice all those that prosecuted, those they had questions marks about whether or not they were guilty, whether or not they had been tortured, until we get Daley to show that he's not the Teflon Don — until we do that, I wouldn't give a flying dove if you put a memorial on every corner. A memorial is just a figure. Let the memorial be a starting point for us to say, 'We will never tolerate this again. We will never again turn a blind eye.'"

CTJM organizers insist that the voice of the black community should no longer be ignored as it was throughout the history of the torture cases. The open call does not announce a competition and there will be no jury. Each voice will be heard

and each submitted proposal exhibited.

SAIC photography professor Daniel Bauer is skeptical whether a purely grassroots initiative will raise the desired awareness. He argues for a high profile juried architecture competition that would call for proposals for a municipal monument. He remains adamant: "The memorial cannot be anecdotal." With the support of donors, foundations and the press, the competition could open a nationally publicized conversation. This approach would be more likely to put pressure on the city to confront its misdeeds.

CTJM is part of a continuing effort to obtain justice for the torture survivors. Chicago lawyer and partner at the Peoples Law Office Joey Mogul hopes a reinvigorated public interest in the torture cases will exert pressure on the City Council to support a reparations ordinance. Reparations could include financial compensation, psychological treatment and vocational training for the victims.

The trauma of police torture has left a black scar on the city of Chicago. It is difficult to conceive of a memorial while torture victims remain in prison without hearings, Area 2 officers have yet to be prosecuted for their crimes and the city refuses to take collective responsibility.

"What we can do is act in solidarity with the survivors," declares Palmer. "If you feel like you have to be a survivor to do or feel something about torture, it is a huge loss of an understanding of what it means to be part of a community."





CALL!

FOR PROPOSALS

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All submitted proposals will be exhibited at one or more of the following venues: Chicago area art galleries, community centers, and a dedicated website. We hope this project will help to build a social movement strong enough to deter these and other acts of torture and transform our broken criminal justice system.

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Eligibility

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Criteria for Proposals

A proposed monument may take any form—from architecture to haiku, from website to mural, from community organization to performance, from bronze plaque to large-scale memorial.

Submission Process

The submission can be in the form of a PDF, PPT, webpage, or other accessible electronic format. Non-electronic submissions will also be accepted.

email contact

justicememorials@gmail.com

mail to

Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project
c/o People's Law Office
1180 N. Milwaukee
Chicago, Illinois 60642

PROFILE

STILL SPINNING

**Justin Long continues the
tradition of Chicago House music**

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BEN MACRI

DJ, artist and Chicago native Justin Long, not to be confused with the actor of the same name, has been at the forefront of the Chicago House music scene since its proliferation in the late 1980s. The Chicago House style is one that is quite unique to the genre. There's a rawness specific to its sound which stems from the use of drum machines and a strong "do-it-yourself" aesthetic. Pulling a strong influence from Disco, early techno such as Kraftwerk, Italo and Post Punk, Justin found himself

[continued on next page]



PROFILE

“ I was often occupied with feelings of confusion and insecurity, and it was the music that provided rapture.

Justin Long



→
[continued from previous page]

enthralled by this newly emerging musical art form. He developed a lifelong obsession with collaging sounds from two records together. When Long was getting his start, the city of Chicago was a hotbed of racism and gang-related violence, and for him, making music was a way of escaping the grittiness of the city. “During that time,” Long says, “I was often occupied with feelings of confusion and insecurity, and it was the music that provided rapture.”

Long, a veteran DJ of 22 years, has developed a practice of exclusively spinning vinyl records. According to him, not only is the sound quality better, but he also enjoys the physicality of the vinyl and the challenge of being limited by the amount of music he is able to draw from when performing. In an increasingly digital age, as with many art

forms, there is a separation between the analog and someone who steps in front of a crowd and hits play on their iPad.

After years of perfecting his craft, Long is now the longest running resident DJ — 11 years this July — with his monthly “Dotbleep” party every third Saturday at one of Chicago’s foremost nightclubs, Smartbar. “After all this time there is an excitement in creating something new every night. You put yourself into it and give a piece of yourself to the crowd and become a singular interlocked organism. ... It’s like creating a full conversation with someone using only a limited vocabulary.”

Long’s journey as an artist has progressed past the realm of just turntables, needles and vinyl. He now attends the School of The Art Institute of Chicago and is heavily invested in his studies

in the Painting and Drawing department. Long recounts the beginning of his lasting interests in art and music with regard to the visual elements of alternative culture: “As maturity began to override my body, skateboard culture, punk rock music, comic books and weekly outings to Medusa’s [a teenage, long lost, all-ages dance club on School and Sheffield] would become the centers of curiosity. It was these elements that provided me with the spectacles to see through the garbage that oozes out of the pores of commercial popular culture and molded my visual interest.” Trips to museums, Saturday morning cartoons, his mom’s Conan the Barbarian comics and coloring books laid the foundation for not only his musical creations, but his visual language as well.

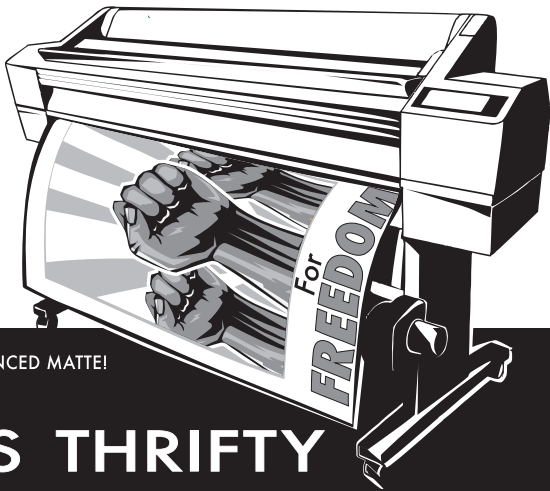
PROFILE



Justin Long at home
Photos by Ben Macri

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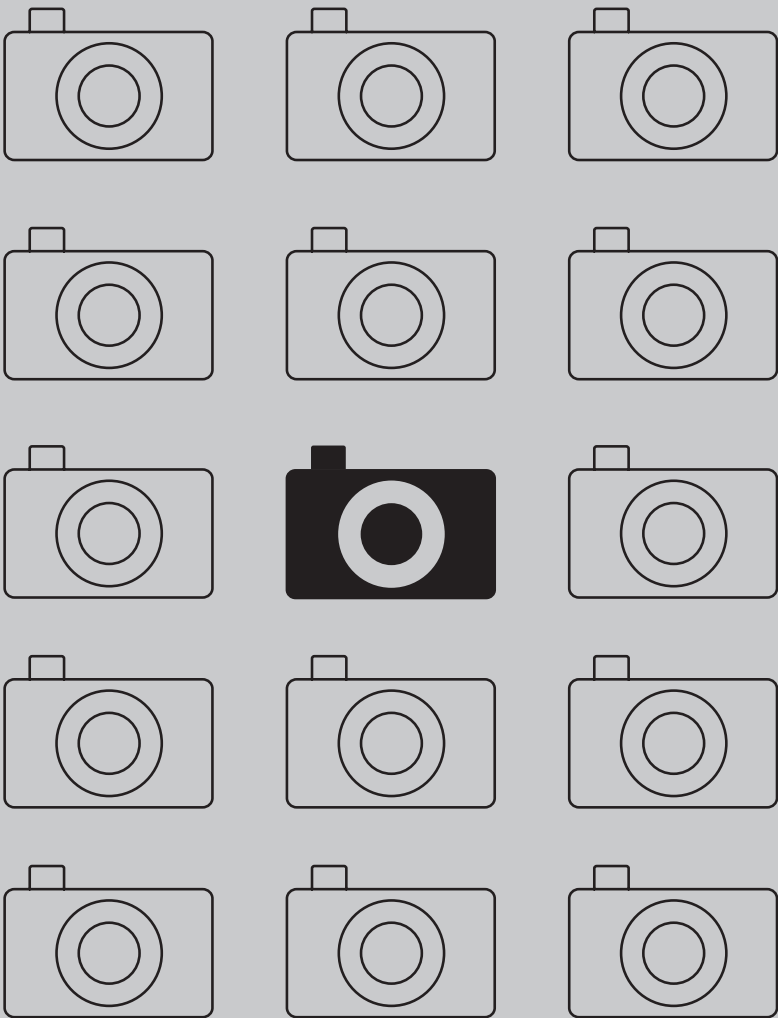


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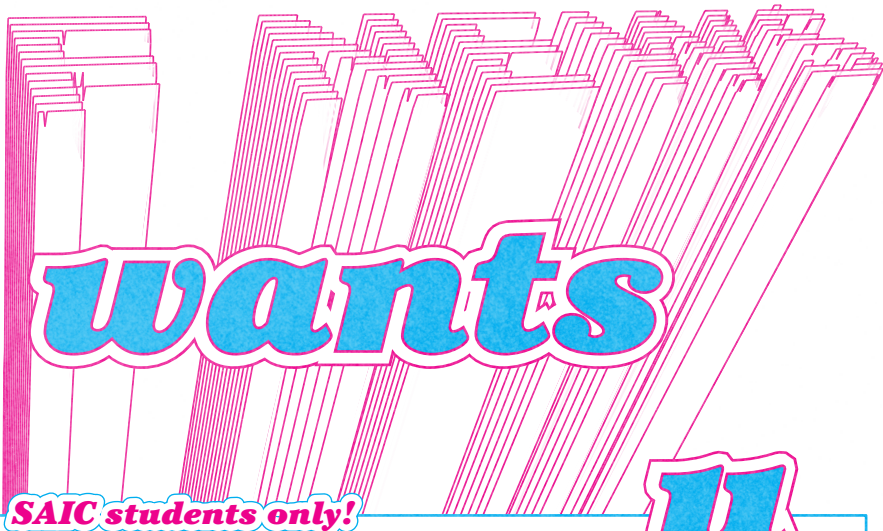


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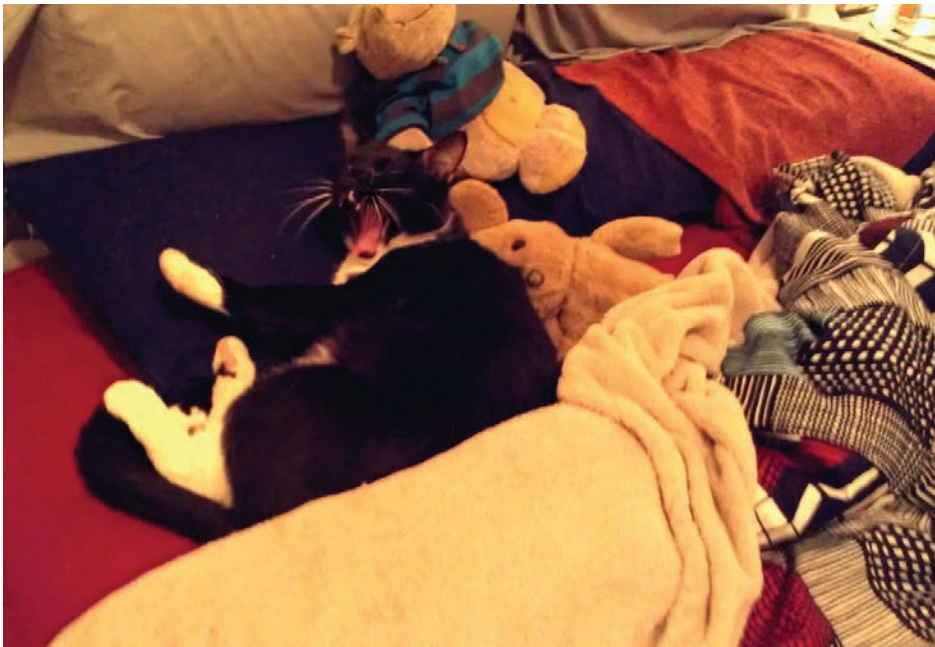
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PROFILE



Photo by John Atwood

An interview with Chicago musician Daniel Knox

BY KRIS LENZ

Daniel Knox creates music that transports its listener to far-off, imagined destinations. He forgoes contemporary influence and instead reaches back to a golden age of songwriting. He borrows phrasing from influences like Maurice Chevalier and Al Jolson to create a style that is altogether new.

Knox's unique sound has earned him an impassioned international following and a winter residency at the prestigious Watermill Center on Long Island, New York. F Newsmagazine caught up with Knox as he embarked on a national tour and re-adjusts to life in the real world.

Kris Lenz: What was the best aspect of your residency at the Watermill Center?

Daniel Knox: The best thing for me was that it gave me the opportunity to fail. I went out there with the idea to finish a piece of music I had begun about my friend, the photographer John Atwood. I wasn't sure what that was going to be. I thought it might be inspired by photo-

graphs or one orchestral piece, but because of my freedom there I could throw some of that away and think about how I knew John and wrote about Springfield, Illinois, which is where we are both from.

All these things started coming out, like we lived at the same street corner as each other but never knew each other until we had grown up. So we had a shared history though we were unaware of it. I wouldn't have been able to come to that kind of conclusion writing at home. I would have felt the pressure to get to the end of it. As it is, I still left it a work-in-progress, even though I performed the piece at the end of my residency. I left spaces in it that can expand or be removed. It's the first time I've felt okay doing something like that.

KL: In what way did you gain an "opportunity to fail?"

DK: I guess when I sit down to write a song I am generally waiting for that "great thing" and I'm focused on the final product. But at Watermill Center I was able to think about the tools and moving forward. The thing about it is, even the songs that I work really hard on and labor over — I'm not really sure what they are until I'm done. There's no real point in knowing what a thing is until you're done. If you knew what you were getting into, why bother starting in the first place?

KL: How was your creative process changed as a result?

DK: One thing I gained is the impulse to consider the time I'm thinking about writing as an important part of the creative process of writing. There's a balance of patting yourself on the back and kicking yourself in the ass. Nobody else is really going to do either of those things in the way that you need them to. You kind of have to put the pressure on yourself, but not too hard because you can doubt yourself into nothingness. No

one is going to say, "Hey, you didn't write a song today or think about writing today." It has to be you who does it. So I'm trying to work harder knowing what I'm capable of, but also be a little easier on myself, saying, "Hey, you did a good job."

KL: That is simply a great philosophy about creating any form of art.

DK: Yeah, a little doubt is healthy, but so is a little confidence. You have to find yourself a little interesting. If you don't think your own story is worth telling, why would anyone else want to hear it?

KL: During your performance my friend commented on your "professionally trained" voice. But that's not true, right? You're self-taught.

DK: [Laughs] Yeah I didn't start experimenting with music until I was failing out of film school. I didn't even finish my first year. But in my free time I snuck into the big ballrooms in Chicago hotels and began playing the piano. After a while I got pretty good at it, or more accurately, there was no one there to tell me I wasn't good at it. I started with two fingers, then added more.

At first I was really embarrassed about it. When I performed with an orchestra in England, a cello player was tuning and asked me to play a C. I was like, "Could you point to that on my keyboard?" I can't read or write music, but I can play it.

KL: You also perform solo and that places so much emphasis on your form.

DK: Let's be honest. I do hit a few sour notes [laughs]. I learned to sing by wandering the abandoned financial district at night. I'd just sing Elvis Presley and Judy Garland songs — the stuff I like.

KL: You have such an archaic tone to your singing and music writing, how did you arrive at that style?

DK: Is "archaic" a nice way of saying "old-timey?" I wouldn't say that's inaccurate. The beginning of that was hearing a song by Maurice Chevalier called "Living in the Sunlight, Loving in the Moonlight." It was the idea that somebody could gleefully sing about something awful. There's something about owning that idea and making an anthem of it that appealed to me. In Tin Pan Alley and music recorded on wax cylinders there's an enthusiasm about even being able to hear yourself. That gave me a starting point.

KL: In contemporary music there is such an emphasis in pushing music theoretically and sonically that voice is almost an afterthought. How much does contemporary music influence you?

DK: I probably have too negative of an opinion about contemporary music. I don't relate or connect to it and it sounds like people trying to win each other's approval. Like someone who is trying on someone else's hat — why don't you want your own hat? A lot of times if you take the layers away and look at what the song is, it'd just be a pile of leaves that would blow away with nothing underneath. What does it sound like without the strings or other cool shit? Is it any good? Is it something I haven't seen before?

KL: With music does it feel like you've found your creative output? Are you still drawn to film?

DK: When I began working in music I felt some relief that I wouldn't have to struggle with film anymore. But now I realize that I've never stopped making films. The process still feels like I'm writing and still creating films, my work is so visual. I don't see it as giving one up. I see it all as coming from the same place.

You can hear Daniel Knox's music and learn more about him at DanielKnox.com

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REVIEW

Popcorn Proletariats

Hollywood takes on Suzanne Collins’ “Hunger Games”

BY THANIA RIOS

The eagerness with which American adults devour books meant for children has been bemoaned by many literary critics. In the New York Times, columnist Joel Stine recently declared that “the only thing more embarrassing than catching a guy on the plane looking at pornography on his computer is seeing a guy on the plane reading ‘The Hunger Games.’ Or a Twilight book. Or Harry Potter.” He then went on to say that while it’s possible that Collins’ novels “[delve] into issues of identity, self-justification and anomie that would make David Foster Wallace proud,” he wouldn’t know, since he was busy readings books meant for adults.

This is hardly a revolutionary position. For every adult who looks forward to the next “Twilight” movie, there’s another appalled that anyone old enough to breed would be aware of its existence.

But a startling number of intellectuals are embracing Suzanne Collins’ “The Hunger Games.” While Stein sneers at young adult literature in the op-ed section of the New York Times, critics A. O. Scott and Manohla Dargis hold a symposium about where heroine Katniss Everdeen fits in the pantheon of American heroes.

Stein might accuse Scott and Dargis of crediting the text with more intelligence than it deserves. But they are not the first to interpret “The Hunger Games” through such a lens. From cultural stalwarts like The New Yorker to activist firebrands like Colorlines, many publications are reading the text as a sly, subversive critique of capitalism, defying traditional ideas about what readers want from popular literature. Is it even possible to make an anti-capitalist statement in popular art? And what does it say about our culture that so many readers are eager to latch onto an anti-capitalist narrative?

The concept behind “The Hunger Games” is simple: in the post-apocalyptic world of Panem, unlucky children from impoverished, outlying districts are conscripted by the government of their wealthy, over-privileged Capitol to fight to the death in the titular contest. The competitors are decided by lottery. After her younger sister has the misfortune of being chosen, heroine Katniss Everdeen volunteers to go in her place.

Much of the series revolves around the protagonist’s struggle to survive while retaining what remains of her humanity. She also grapples with conflicts familiar to any member of an

underprivileged group. As a gladiator, she’s awash in riches, but many of her admirers are incapable of understanding hardship, or the psychological cost of a life of violence.

In the second novel, “Catching Fire,” Katniss and her love interest Peeta are invited to a ball thrown in celebration of their victory. The gourmet spread lulls them into a sense of complacency; they forget their moral revulsion and gorge themselves, soon becoming full and unable to proceed with festivities. They’re then instructed by helpful well-wishers to vomit what they’ve already eaten, which reminds them of the thoughtless brutality of their society.

Coming from an oppressed, neglected district in which starvation is a common fate, the idea of wasting food is obscene to them. Their fans in the Capitol mean them no harm, but they’re incapable of conceiving of a world with a scarcity of resources. Their half-baked kindness only serves to remind Katniss and Peeta of their sub-human status. Worse yet, the exchange forces them to reckon with their tendency to humanize their oppressors — an easier way of dealing with injustice than out-and-out resistance.

Even though Collins is telling a fabulist story, many young readers can still relate to her depiction of class dynamics. At first glance, it might seem strange that adolescents would be interested in anti-capitalist satire; however, as Astra Taylor says in the Occupy! Gazette, “Our society, and the left especially, has this strange idea that young people are the revolutionary vanguard.” Rebellion and revolution seem like the terrain of young adult literature because they’re so often considered the terrain of the young. It’s worth noting that many young adult novels that resonate with adults often involve lengthy discussions of state-building and the best way to structure a government, such as the later “Harry Potter” books and Philip Pullman’s “His Dark Materials” series.

Part of the reason that “The Hunger Games” is popular with so many adults could be because it offers them a safe space to explore their discontent with their society in the wake of the Great Recession. But it is nevertheless a novel published by Scholastic Press that has spawned an expansive franchise. As such, it has certain obligations to CEOs and stockholders that it must fulfill, obligations that could compromise its vision.

Upon reviewing the film adaptation, A.V. Club critic Scott

Tobias said, “In movie terms, [the book’s content] suggests Paul Verhoeven in Robocop/Starship Troopers mode, an R-rated bloodbath where the grim spectacle of children murdering each other on television is bread-and-circuses for the age of reality TV, enforced by a totalitarian regime to keep the masses at bay.” But the finished product, directed by Gary Ross, doesn’t look like one of Verhoeven’s cult classics as much as it does “Twilight,” albeit with better acting and an eye for social commentary.

It isn’t badly made, but it is tamer than the novel that spawned it. Is this any surprise, considering the demands of the franchise? Popular as the novels might be, they can’t move Barbies and Capitol-inspired nail polish. But where does this leave those who wish to argue for an emancipatory interpretation of “The Hunger Games?” Does the fact that it’s a piece of popular art created in a capitalist society nullify any anti-capitalist messages it might contain? Or is any undermining inflicted by the movie and its PR campaign to be regarded as an acceptable consequence of reading a mass audience?

These aren’t easy questions to answer. Indeed, entire artistic movements have risen and fallen in their attempt to grapple with them. But one thing is certain: the world is watching Collins’ work, and that’s not something that very many creators can say.



Illustration by Gabriela Magaña

Popular as the novels might be, they can’t move Barbies and Capitol-inspired nail polish. But where does this leave those who wish to argue for an emancipatory interpretation of “The Hunger Games”?

FEATURE



Photos by Ben Macri

FEATURE



The Lights Are Back On

Logan Theater completes renovation

BY MEGAN BURBANK

There are few things I like more than paying \$3 to sit in a dingy theater on a dusty seat and watch a movie (that I will probably be able to get on Netflix in a month) on a big screen at the very last opportunity. I mean this in all honesty, and since theaters like the Logan are a benediction to those of us who procrastinate as seriously with getting out to see movies as we do with our reading for grad school, I was skeptical when I found out that the theater was being refurbished and reopened as a first-run cinema with comfortable seats and the requisite higher prices.

It doesn't help that the reporter in me has difficulty not being skeptical of its ownership. The Logan facelift comes as a byproduct of its purchase by Marcus Fishman, whose name you might know from the ubiquitous M. Fishman & Co. signs posted on buildings all over Logan Square. His management company owns 16 in the neighborhood, and 10 elsewhere in Chicago. They operate out of an office on Fullerton and did not return my requests for an audience with Fishman.

All radio silence aside, the lights have been back on at the Logan Theater for a month now,

and though I live just a few blocks away down Spaulding Avenue, I didn't check out the space for myself until this week. I finally arrived on a weekday afternoon, toting groceries from the bodega next door. A pair of middle-aged men stood in the lobby eating popcorn and staring languorously at the vintage film posters lining either side of the entryway. The bar and the lobby are clean and furnished with art deco design and randomly placed palm fronds. The entire space seems like someone's idea of a rat pack hideout, but I don't mean this in a bad way.

Fishman has jacked up the ticket prices to \$7 at the Logan Theater, which, while not \$3-third-run cheap, are at least 1997-cheap, and certainly less gouging than what you'd pay at the Regal City North Stadium 14 on Western. The rumors that the theater now sells both beer and Intelligentsia coffee are true, albeit both at movie theater prices — a cup of drip coffee will set you back \$4.

And while the availability of luxury goods seemed worth noting, what really struck me was the sense of anticipation among my lobby compatriots. People in the neighborhood seem genuinely excited about this new addition to our central strip, with its mix of hipster coffee shops, bars, taquerias and unmentionables like

the Milshire Hotel. It's no question that Logan Square is changing, on an almost constant basis. I know this, and I haven't even lived in Chicago for a whole year.

North Milwaukee Avenue provides a visual barometer for the neighborhood's extreme sense of flux, with its storefronts papering over and reopening with new additions. Uncharted Books is just one example of this, a used bookshop that brought a lone bloom into winter when it opened in January just a few doors down from the Logan.

While the journalist in me is sad to report that the theater more than met my expectations, the Logan Square resident does not mind. With summer fast approaching, an air-conditioned theater free from dancing Coke bottles and other corporate trappings beckons like an urban Midwest mirage. And it of course doesn't hurt that the theater will be devoting one of its four screens to Wes Anderson's new film when it opens May 25. But for now, the Logan Theater is an art-deco-swathed reminder that living in Logan Square is sometimes like living inside of a giant construction site. I wouldn't have it any other way.

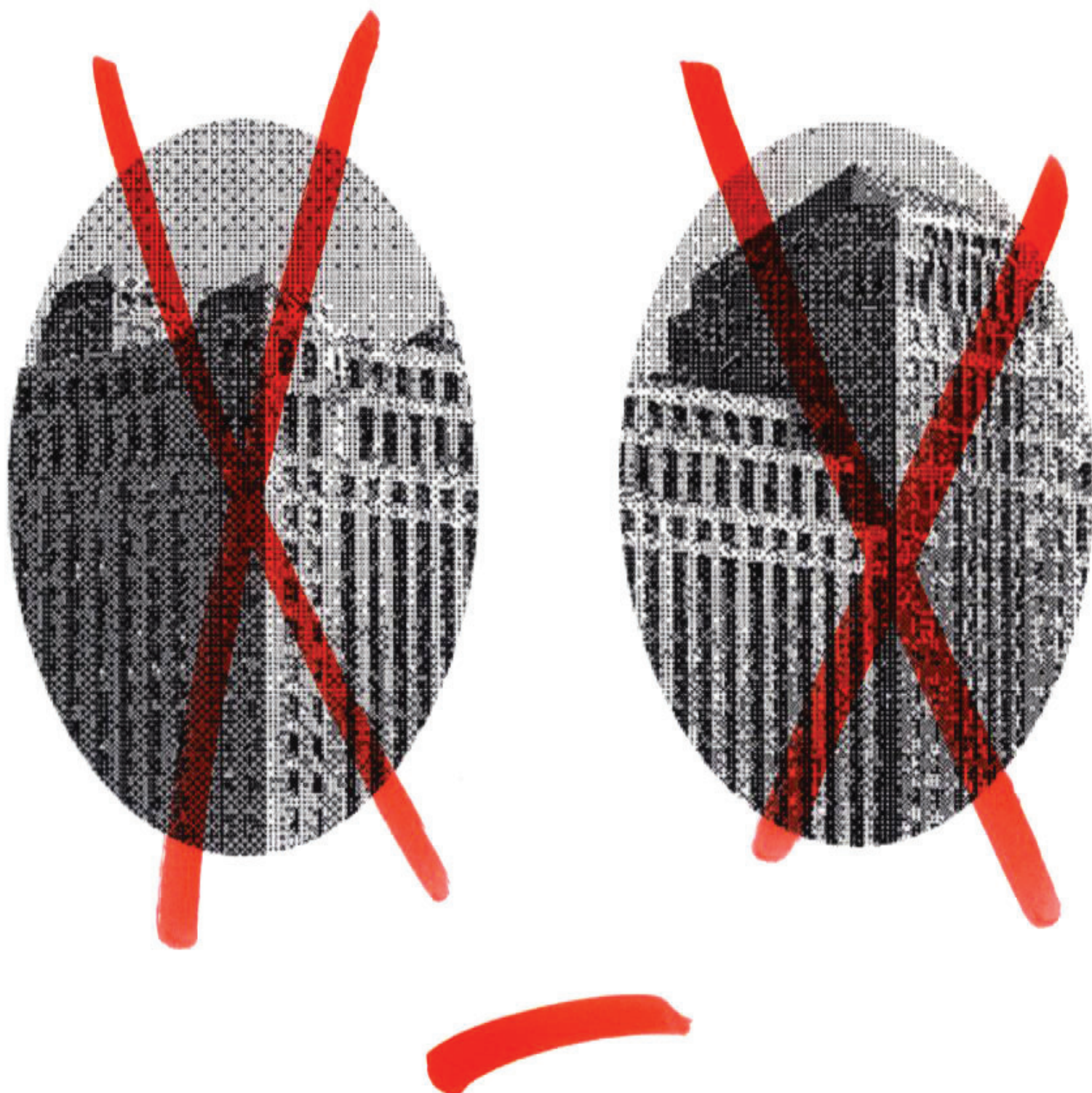


Illustration by Emily Haasch

*Sometimes rich people go to Miami and they're feeling
flashy, but not in Chicago. Chicago is not flashy.*

— Aron Gent

End of an Art Fair

Art Chicago/Next Art Fair's cancellation has left the art world unphased; what does this mean for EXPO Chicago?

BY SARAH HAMILTON

On February 8 of this year, Merchandise Mart sent a brief email to its PR list:

"After a thorough analysis of the art fair landscape, Merchandise Mart Properties has determined not to move forward with the production of the 2012 edition of Next Art Chicago. While Chicago will always remain a cultural tourism destination, is home to a thriving arts community, including galleries, world-class museums, theaters, arts-related organizations, along with thousands of art enthusiasts, it is our conclusion that the great majority of the contemporary art fair market in the United States has gravitated toward the coasts."

The Chicago art establishment seemed somewhat unmoved by Merchandise Mart's statement. The once-mighty Art Chicago/Next Art Fair had gone out with a whimper.

The Art Fair scene has bloated over the last 20 years; Jerry Saltz referred to it as "autocoprophag[ic]" in an article in *Vulture* last year. Saltz was responding to another article written by Adam Lindeman in the *New York Observer* — the one where Lindeman, a monied critic and collector, argues that art fairs should only be for collectors, referring to Art Basel Miami Beach as a "perverse tchotchke bazaar on steroids." Art Chicago did not garner such literary creativity. Reading reviews and previews of Art Chicago and its last iteration, Next Chicago, was like reading an obituary for an aunt that no one in the family was especially fond of: Bad at Sports' preview in 2010 described the energy in Chicago as "a collective shrug/ennui working its way from galleries to collectors." A similar article in the *Tribune* appeared, articulating heavy sighs and begrudged participation. The Chicago Art Fair, in its many forms, seemed terminal.

ONCE BELOVED, AT LAST BELABORED

The history of art fairs in Chicago is an oral history, mired in gossip. "This is really the birthplace of the modern American art fair," explains Tom Burtonwood, SAIC instructor and a Chicago-based artist and gallerist. "What we see today in New York with The Armory, what we see in Miami with Art Basel Miami Beach, started here in Chicago in the early 1980s with the Chicago International Art Exposition, lead by John Wilson."

Wilson lead the art fair until the mid-1990s, when a year of competition from two other art fairs forced him out. One of the fairs, run by Tom Blackman, became Art Chicago. The other fair, run by a couple, ended up moving elsewhere. "David Lester and his wife came in, did this show... I think they called it Art Chicago, or Art Chicago '94, and they did that for a few years — trying to make it work in Chicago, they

said 'to hell with that' and they went down to Miami, and they founded Art Miami. So that was the beginning of the Miami art fair scene," says Burtonwood. "That was 10 years before Art Basel Miami Beach was even a twinkling in the eye of the Swiss. That's significant in a sense... the beginning and the end of Art Chicago. Miami has been the bullet that put Chicago out of its misery."

One of the key years was 2006. "Dealers were showing up with their crates down in Grant Park [for Art Chicago] and nothing was set up. The city tapped [Merchandise] Mart to take it over," explains Burtonwood. He continues, "You get the sense that [the City was] just trying to solve a problem. It could have been good for the city to see Art Chicago fail, to be honest. If it failed in 2006, that might not have been the worst thing in the world. Then the Mart might not have gotten into the game and they might not have bought the Armory [show]. After the Mart got their hands on Art Chicago, they went on an art fair buying spree and they bought Armory, Volta and Art Toronto."

It's at that moment that Art Chicago began to lose its reputation. "The problem is that the quality of Art Chicago just went into the basement. They were letting anybody in that would pay, I reckon," says Burtonwood. "Their quality control had gone out the window, because ultimately, they're a real estate company and they have shareholders to answer to."

Aron Gent, a local artist and independent gallerist, involved in the organization of the Midway Art Fair, recalls an incident where a local gallerist paid full price for a booth at Next: "He got screwed. He barely made a third back what he put into it. And from then on, he didn't do a booth because he got burned so bad and it left a bad taste in his mouth."

Gent was also a vendor last year at Next, "The mood at Next, especially last year was just very solemn. It didn't have the energy that it started with at the beginning. Everyone seemed to be sour."

"Art Chicago, the parent show, had gotten a little stale. It had lost its way. Merchandise Mart [has] a lot of art fair interest and a lot of art fair assets, but they didn't seem to know what to do with Art Chicago and maybe the Art Chicago brand was just too damaged at that point," says Burtonwood. "What's your fair bringing [collectors and dealers] if anyone can get in? That's a killer for an art fair once it gets that reputation."

EXPO ON THE HORIZON

Though Art Chicago seems dead and buried, much relating to the future of EXPO Chicago is tethered to the demise of Art Chicago. The word "fair" conjures the potential for a spectacle — the first title of the Chicago

Art Fair was the Chicago International Art Exhibition, a reference to the great Chicago World's Fair, which is not lost on organizers of the new EXPO Chicago Art Fair, which runs from September 20-23, 2012.

"There's wonderful institutional memory [for] these individuals around the world about what a fair at Navy Pier in Chicago means to the contemporary art world," explains Tony Karmen, President and Director of Expo Chicago. Karmen has been involved with the Chicago Art Fair, in whatever iteration, since the 1980s, serving, until recently, as the Vice President of Art Chicago. He continues, "Chicago is in a unique place because of its history. ... We're remembered in the art world as having a great international fair. But back then there were only two or three fairs in the world; now there are 200 fairs in the world. We will always be judged, rightly or wrongly, on our glorious past. My hope is that we take the best of that past. You can't recreate that moment, but the best part of that vision is 'quality not quantity' design-forward environment, thoughtful curation, lectures, engagement with the community, and connections to the institutions in our city. That, to me, is the model of an art fair in Chicago for many many years."

Burtonwood is much clearer on what EXPO needs to sustain itself. "The Art World is very snobby. It's very elitist and it's very cliquey. If you burn any of [those relationships], it's not going to work," he says, "and as much as I'm all for the democratization of the art world, there are certain aspects of the art world that don't really play to those rules. Art fairs are one of them. They are elite spaces, determined by privilege. People pay for that privilege — in a sense that's democratic. But you also want to select the best."

"Having conferences, symposia and professional panels at art fairs is definitely a precedent, explains Tony Karmen. "What we will do a little bit deeper, which is just a Chicago thing, is make sure those conference and panel programs aren't just about the art world talking to the art world. It's about the art world hearing about what's happening within Chicago."

Burtonwood is pretty clear on the keys to EXPO's success. "They have to build a wall and they have to build it high. Ideally make it out of gold or marble, and keep the riff raff away. We could have a satellite show in Chicago, but until they define EXPO as being a destination for people to come to Chicago in the first place, [and] unless people are willing to travel from Beijing, Johannesburg, Seoul, Amsterdam, Buenos Aires, Mexico City as galleries, collectors and artists, to come to Chicago in September, it's a moot point," he explains, "If they're not an international fair, then all it will be is a regional fair, and if it's just a regional fair we might as well have stuck with Art Chicago."

Karmen agrees, "If we could hit the note of the openness of the Independent with the extraordinary vibe of Frieze, with the sophistication of a FIAC, a Maastricht or an Art Basel, you [will] probably hear me say we've hit the exact note that we want."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CHICAGO?

"The announcement in September was when a ceiling was established. We were able to announce a ... number of top dealers around the world — that sent an important signal to the world that we were serious, that this is not a regional fair. That this is a fair of top quality, and that was the only way that we were going to be presenting this. The response in Chicago has been extraordinary," says Karmen. "From a civic, cultural business community, there's an acknowledgement that the fair that Chicago had is a fair that Chicago would love to see again. I think that has a lot to do with extraordinary work of our institutions. There's a little bit of a Chicago moment happening and I think there always has been."

The state of the Chicago Art Fair is neither the beginning nor the end of the Chicago art scene. Though the cancellation of Art Chicago/Next Art fair is a blow, it belies more pressing problems that Chicago needs to address, such as the impending Chicago Cultural Plan, the first for Chicago since 1986.

"Look at how the city's dealing with the art world right now. We've got cultural planners from Toronto telling us what we need to do," says Burtonwood, "We have a Department of Cultural Affairs that's been stripped of all its assets and all the people that work there don't know if they're going to be employed next week."

Gent sees the problems as being based in a shifting local and global economic climate. "I think [EXPO Chicago] will be better than Next, but I don't think people are going to sell. ... I really still think the problem is getting people to come and buy art. I just don't think it's going to happen," explains Gent. "Collectors have relationships with dealers and they're very specific. It's who do you want to hang out with and have drinks with and eat dinners with? You're not going to go in and get a blind buy on a piece for \$10,000 at an art fair — it just doesn't happen. Sometimes rich people go to Miami and they're feeling flashy, but not in Chicago. Chicago is not flashy. People need to be taught how to collect — not the high-end art, but the middle range [works]."

"It's all very interconnected. You see the influence of Art Chicago in art fairs around America and internationally. Maybe Chicago has done its bit for the art fairs. Maybe we don't need to worry about having kickass fairs. Maybe we should focus on taking artists and galleries down to Miami."



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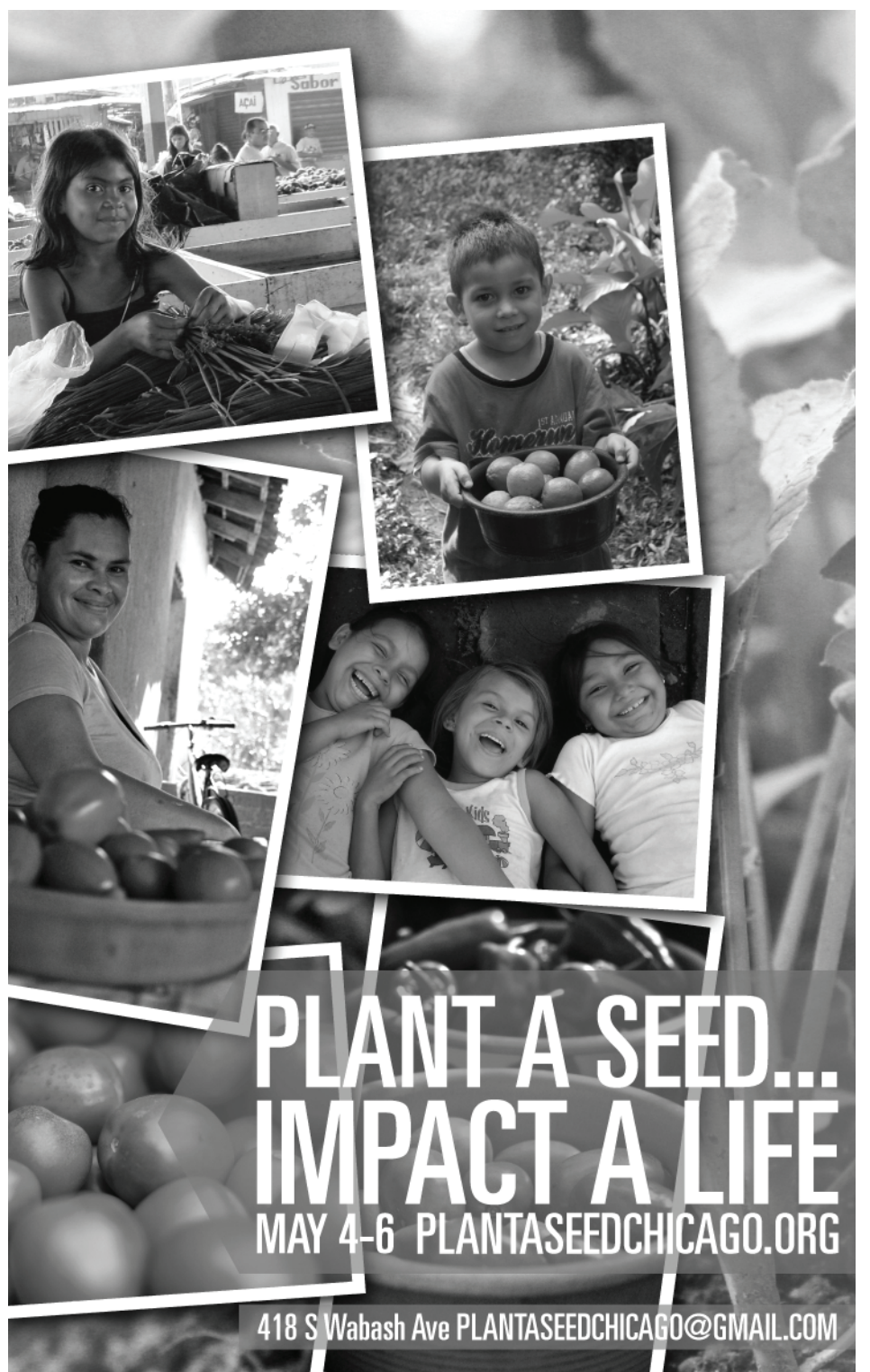
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REVIEW

Rashid Johnson: —Self-Creation Myths—

New exhibition at the MCA shows diverse aspects of Post-black artist

BY KRIS LENZ

Ancient astronomers turned their eyes to the sky and shaped meaning by plotting the chaos of distant points of light. This act of creation served a dual purpose. It facilitated the placement of a mythology firmly within a historical tradition (i.e. creation myths) and also creates a system of augury through which one can predict what will come, as in zodiac horoscopes.

The term “post-black” refers to African-American artists who seek to create new identities within a historical narrative and codify their precedents. In this there is a shared impulse with the ancient astronomers who reached points of reference and drew original connections between them. Artists like Rashid Johnson (who has unflinchingly borne the assignation “post-black” since curator Thelma Golden termed his work as such in 2001) have constructed “Cradles of Purpose” by appropriating the iconography of crypto-Muslim sects, prominent artistic and historical figures and the wild cosmology of the Afro-Futurists.

**“Men are born.
Kings are made.”**
— Fela Kuti

At the heart of Rashid Johnson’s body of work is a deeply ingrained sense of humor and play. Even when addressing topics as serious as black identity, it can be difficult to gauge whether he is mocking or seriously undertaking this task of historical re-configuration. Johnson recently opened his first major solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago. He worked closely with curator Julie Rodrigues Widholm to select a body of work, which includes photographs, video installations and “shelf-like” installations produced over his 14-year career.

The video “Sweet, Sweet Runner” (2010) calls to mind the classic 1970s film “Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song” and welcomes visitors to Johnson’s exhibition. The protagonist of the original film was a young African-American on the run from white authority figures. In Johnson’s re-telling, the protagonist appears to be on a casual jog through the streets of New York. Johnson also scores his film to a ’70s funk soundtrack that simultaneously draws a parallel to the source work while also creating a heightened sense of drama, lampooning the plight of the contemporary black man.

This funky soundtrack and Johnson’s use of mirrored surfaces help create a carnivalesque atmosphere that carries the viewer throughout the exhibition galleries. Johnson’s mirrors

also perform another function by addressing a contemporary reading of the W. E. B. DuBois concept of “double consciousness.” Johnson titles one of his shelf-like pieces “Triple Consciousness” (2009) and uses three copies of Al Green’s “Greatest Hits” (1975) as a sort of tripartite mirroring. Thick black wax (a recurring element in his work) covers the surface and offers a backdrop for gold spray-paint that echoes a street art aesthetic. Compare this piece to its companion “The Shuttle” (2011). For this Johnson moves from the gritty, urban-voodoo altar construction and instead references the astrally-inclined cosmology of Afro-Futurists like Sun Ra. The shape and sleek mirrored surface invokes space travel while the prominent placement of a book titled “The Universe” leaves little leeway for interpretation.

Johnson flirts with navel-gazing in his aesthetic of incorporating everyday objects he calls “hijacking the domestic.” One gets the impression that the objects on Johnson’s shelves — and other recurring symbolic references, including the Public Enemy “crosshairs” — might have been too casually gathered from Johnson’s life.

The “shelf-like” pieces that seem to dominate the show, in both number and towering size, present more concerns than satisfying results. SAIC Art History Professor Delinda Collier noted that nostalgia and relying on history may be a flimsy premise — a towering house of cards that can’t withstand the slightest shift in breeze. Once an artist makes a game of reference it can be difficult to move away from it as analysis. One might end up searching for obvious connections that are not there.

Johnson’s work feels more at ease when he is playing with and subverting more aesthetic conventions. A highlight of the show for Collier is “Antibiotic” (2011). This oversized piece of black soap and wax is almost an anti-Pollock work. It operates like a black hole, seemingly sucking the color out of the room. Where Pollock lays colors, Johnson begins with a black surface and gouges out lines. Another striking piece is “Body Blow” (2012). The violent appearance of black paint that explodes out of the mirrored surface before dripping down is palpable in its sense of violation. The viewer is inextricably drawn into and situated in the context of the thick dark streak splitting the piece in two.

Perhaps the strength of the exhibition is Johnson’s photography. Artfully curated into a “salon chic” presentation, one has many options for engaging this body of work. Stand back and



Rashid Johnson, “Self-Potrait with my hair parted like Frederick Douglass,” 2003. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

let the overwhelming presence and articulation of his work overwhelm you. Or stride forward and engage each work in turn. Johnson began his career as a photographer and his astute, sensitive eye is clear in each image selected.

There is no question of whether Johnson is a gifted artist or if he was ready for such a high-profile exhibition. He has produced a wildly diverse and creative body of work that is more than served within the framework of a retrospective. It is perhaps best to engage his work in such a manner, and see the points of light Johnson has selected (or created) in creating his artistic mythology. It is important not to get buried in the details illuminating Johnson’s personal cosmology and instead get lost in your own version of the starry-eyed reverie he invokes.

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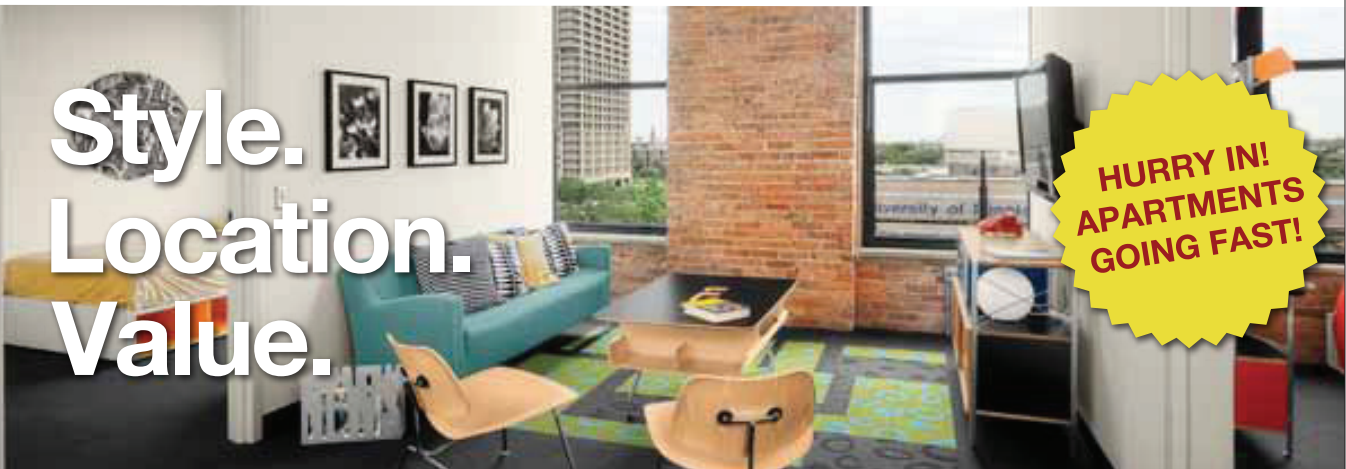


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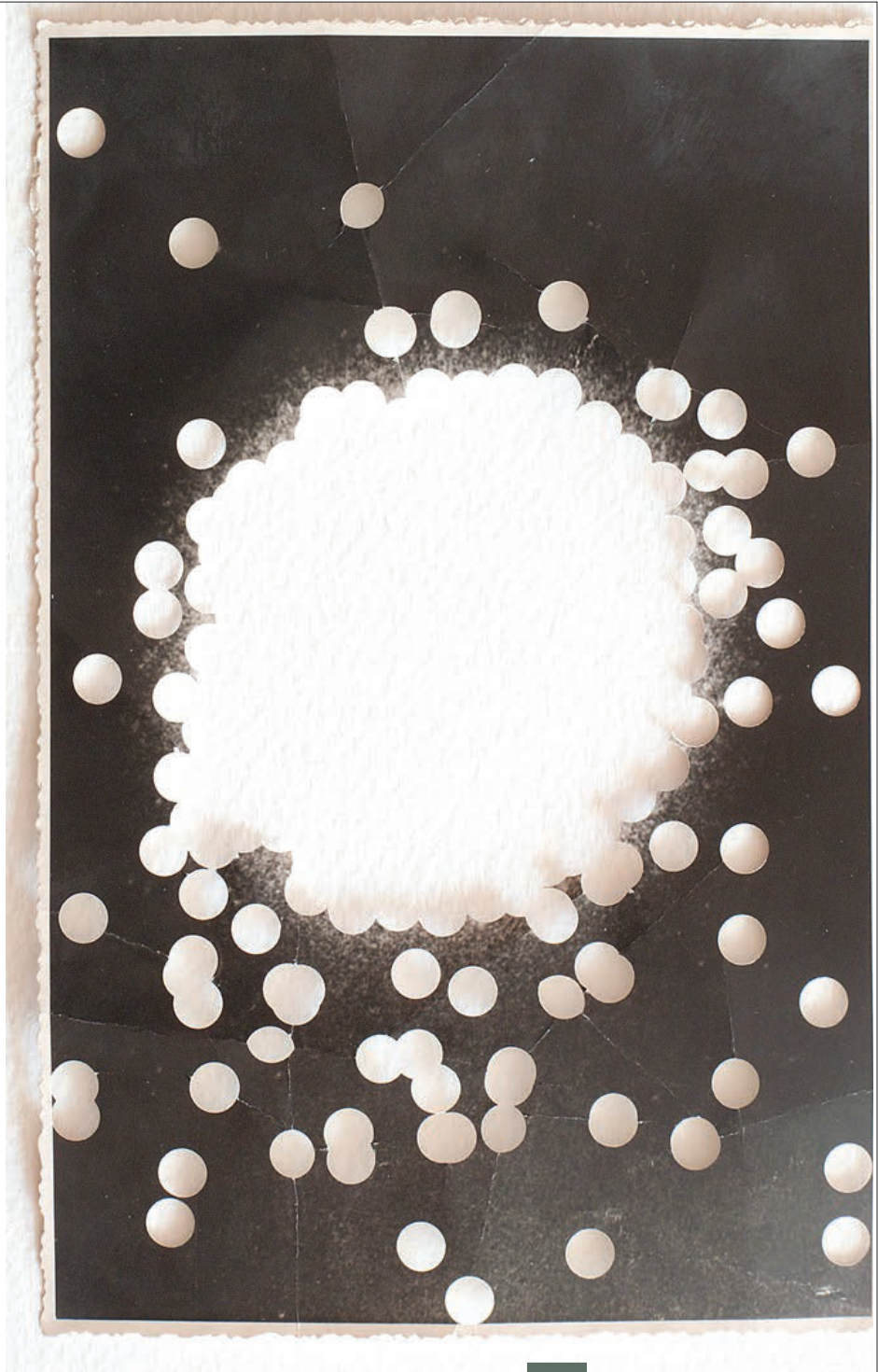
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REVIEW



Andy Warhol, Untitled (Dog), 1976



Andy Warhol, Untitled (Farrah Fawcett), 1979



Andy Warhol, Untitled (Uncle Same), 1981

Collection of the DePaul Art Museum, gift of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

MANUFACTURED ICONS MANUFACTURING

Andy Warhol and Studio Malick at the DePaul Art Museum

Impromptu party photos show an exuberant youth

culture comprised, not of celebrities, but

regular, cool, young, Malians

BY MICHELLE WEIDMAN

Andy Warhol is an undisputed icon of American art — his work merged high art and popular culture, highlighting connections between money, fame and cultural value. So, the current exhibition of Warhol Polaroids and silver gelatin prints at the DePaul Art Museum should easily be the most interesting part of the current show. However, the Studio Malick exhibition on the ground level of the museum is more compelling, not only because Malick's photos lack Warhol's overexposure. The two shows together create some interesting parallels, which was one of assistant curator Gregory Harris' intentions for hanging the series simultaneously.

Studio Malick is a showcase of Malick Sidibé's portraits taken in Mali after the country gained full independence from French colonization in 1960. The photos, both studio compositions and impromptu party photos, show an exuberant youth culture comprised, not of celebrities, but regular, cool, young Malians exploring recently embraced forms of entertainment and fashion. Sidibé was, in some ways, the forebearer of today's bar-glamour photographers — spotlighting the impossible stardom of those of us whose 15 minutes of fame are less than likely, but who clean up pretty damn nicely on the weekends.

The exhibition is made up of

Sidibé's photos reprinted from his negatives as well as some of his original "chemise" — print folders that would have been displayed in his studio window and used as examples from which his subjects could pick what photos they wanted to purchase. The print folders add an air of authenticity and nostalgia to the show, offering a glimpse at Sidibé's process as well as the initial commercial nature of his career. It wasn't until an exhibition in Paris in 1995 that Sidibé's photos gained international attention. He has since received the Hasselblad award for photography in 2003.

The images themselves range from energetic club shots to carefully composed studio images. One exemplary studio frame features a Malian couple seated on a motorcycle — the man with his shoes shined, donning a suit and tie, perched behind the woman in the driver's seat wearing a string of pearls and a smirk.

The Andy Warhol photographs are on the second floor of the museum. Included are 25 Polaroids and silver gelatin prints ranging from images of Farrah Fawcett to a reluctant-looking dachshund, which may have been one of Warhol's pets. The selections are a portion of a gift to the museum from the Andy Warhol Legacy

Program and were chosen by Harris for their quality as well as to highlight the breadth of subjects in the full collection. The Legacy Program requests that their collections be displayed within a certain amount of time after being gifted, which was the museum's other motivation for the current show. Despite the necessity of their display, they do offer an interesting parallel to Sidibé's body of work in subject and tone.

In contrast Warhol's images are intentionally artificial-looking. Most of the images were later used as references for paintings or prints and weren't necessarily meant to stand as works in themselves. Many of the Polaroid subjects are wearing heavy makeup to eliminate shadow that would have impeded their later use for Warhol's high-contrast final pieces.

Both series give an incidental nod toward the ability of photography to make icons out of its subjects. While some of Warhol's subjects are anonymous, his handling washes them with an aura of untouchability — even the dachshund would rather be doing lines of coke or getting a blow job. Sidibé's subjects, on the other hand, while still irresistibly cool, seem invested in the portrayal of their subculture.

Even [Warhol's] dachshund would rather be doing lines of coke or getting a blow job.



Malick Sidibé, Pretending to Smoke, 1976



Malick Sidibé, Woman in a Checkered Dress, 1971



Malick Sidibé, The Two of Us on a Motorcycle, 1970

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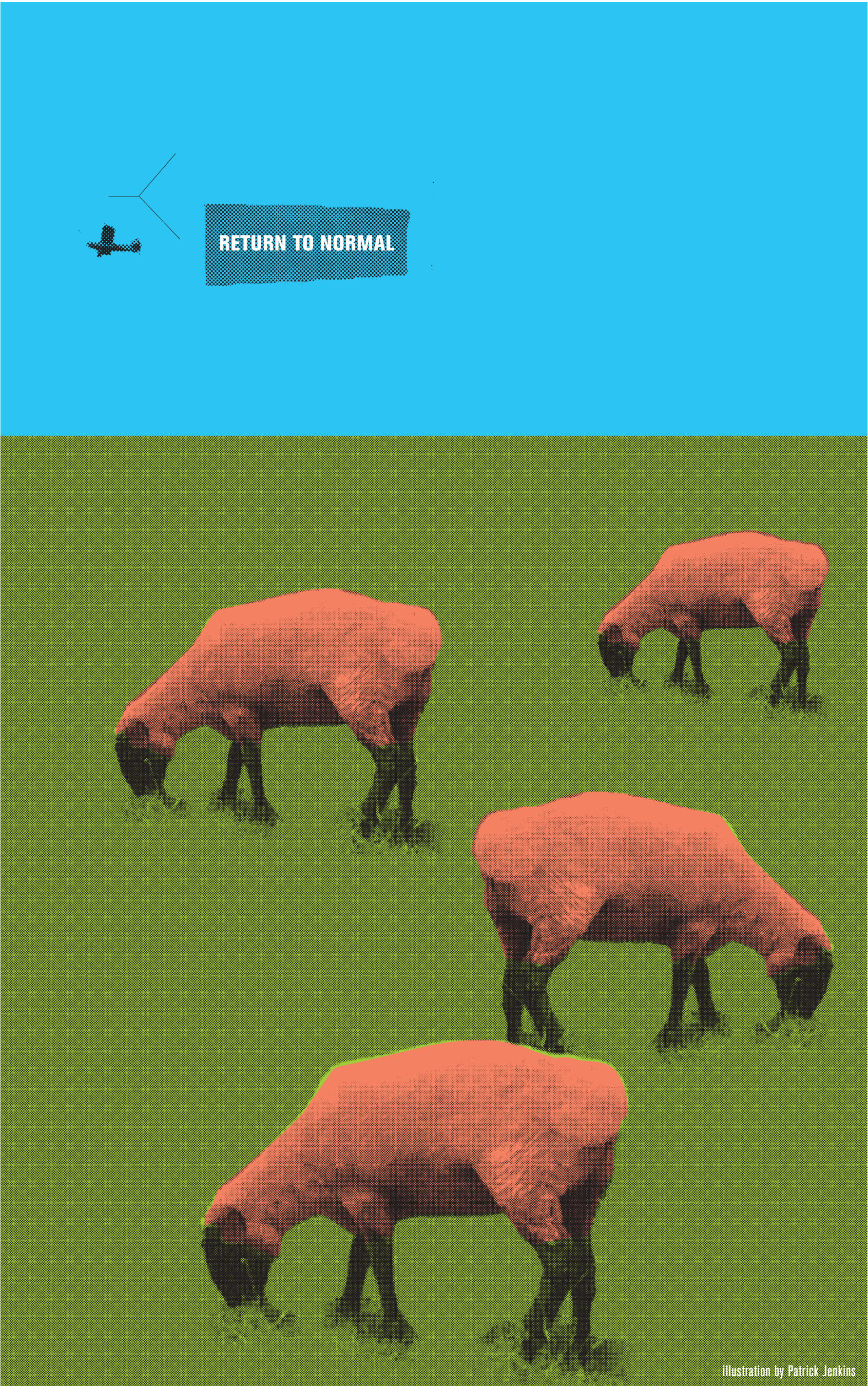


illustration by Patrick Jenkins

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 - Multilevel painting - 6 figure paintings crit on May 3.
-
- Fill out co-op app
 - mail rent checks
 - finish port foto, in
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 - finish project for
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 - Submit form to Design show
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Shorts / Shots

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